



# Role of education in the development of social condition of the scheduled caste people of selected development blocks in Kamrup District, Assam, India

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## Abstract

Complete development of a person is possible only through education, social contact and relationship. It is not only desirable but essential to train the individual to be able to subordinate his own needs and individuality to the social requirements. One cannot be a man all alone. The individual will mould itself according to the will of the society. That is why education should enable a man, a child, a community to cultivate such qualities in him as to benefit the society through his own activities. Education is considered the most powerful instrument of social change and development. It is through education that a society can bring desirable changes and development by developing the its members' personal and social condition.

**Keywords :** D-development, C-caste, S-social, L-literate, Ilt-illiterate.

## 1. Introduction

Education is the only means for developing human resources. In developing our society on all its fronts such as economic, social, cultural and political, education can play a vital role. Education alone can bring necessary changes through peaceful means. It can help us in preserving our cultural and social wealth and can save us from the destructive tendencies of the age.

Education is considered the most powerful instrument of social change. It is through education that the society can bring desirable changes and modernize itself. A number of studies have been conducted worldwide to investigate into the relation between education and social change vis-à-vis the role of education in bringing about a social development. Holmberg and Dobyns (1962) in their project on the role of enlightenment in social development comment "education became enmeshed in wider social change as knowledge became the means to status and effective participation" (Quoted by Dr. S. S. Mathur, 1992, p. 91), (Mathur, 1992).

Their work has established the importance of education in modernisation or modernising a community. Another study by Lerner (1958) finds that the key to modernisation lies in the participant society, that is, one in which people go through school, read newspapers, are in the wage and market economy, participate politically through elections, and change opinions on matters of public business. He writes, "High multiple correlations were found between urbanisation, literacy, media participation and political participation, each correlated in turn with the other three". In the Indian context also a number of empirical studies have shown the positive effects of education on modernity.

Giving adequate importance to education for developing social condition of the people of a country is necessary. It is not without reason that education has received great attention at the hands of leaders, religious and social reformers. They have strongly advocated the use of education as the most important instrument of bringing about changes in the society. Education is not for the sake of

knowledge only. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, for instance, laid great stress on education for improving the economic and social condition of the people. In this paper an attempt has been made to look into the impact as well as the role of education in the development of social condition of the Scheduled Caste people belonging particularly to Hajo and Kamalpur Community Development Blocks of Kamrup District (Rural).

The term caste means a system of dividing Hindu society into classes. It is very difficult to state when the caste system was originated in India. During the Vedic period, there was no caste system in India. Society was divided on the basis of "Varna" which means "choice of Occupation". Such a division of individuals on the basis of occupation was considered very helpful in the harmonious functioning of the society.

In this paper Scheduled Caste people were selected to study the role of education on their social status. The term Scheduled Caste includes several castes in the Hindu Society, whose names vary in different parts of the country. As per Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Order Act, 1976, Assam has sixteen castes categorized as scheduled castes. Initially they were known as depressed class of the society. But, according to the constitutional provision, from the year 1950 the following 16 castes were known as scheduled castes in Assam. They are "Busphor, Bhui Mali, or Mali, Brittil-Bonia, Dhubi, Dugala, Hira, Jallo-Mallo, Jallkeot, Kaibarta, Lallbegi, Mohra, Mahtor or Bhangi, Musdi, Namasudra, Patnis, Sutradhar" (Thakur, 1992).

## 2. Objectives

- 1) To study the social status of the literate scheduled caste families.
- 2) To study the social status of the illiterate scheduled caste families.

## 3. Hypotheses

On the basis of the objectives the investigator has formulated the following hypotheses –

- H<sub>1</sub>**: There is significant relationship between education and the social status of the scheduled caste families.
- H<sub>2</sub>** : There is significant difference of social status between literate and illiterate scheduled caste families.

## 4. Indicators of Social Status

In this study, to mark the social status of the scheduled caste people following indicators were selected :

### (a) Decision making process

- i) Managing daily routine.
- ii) Child birth and number of children.
- iii) Education of their children.
- iv) Type of house.
- v) Hygienic condition of living.
- vi) Dietary habits.
- vii) Adopting family planning measures.
- viii) In any construction work.
- ix) In purchasing property.

### (b) Social Link

- i) Position hold in any social organization.
- ii) Recognition received in the society.
- iii) Political awareness of the people.
- iv) Involvement in different social activities.
- v) House hold infrastructure.
- vi) Number of children and their level of education.

## 5. Delimitation of the Study

The investigation is delimited to two community development blocks of

Kamrup District (Rural) namely Hajo and Kamalpur. Only scheduled caste families were selected randomly from those areas for the study.

## 6. Methods and Procedures

Looking into the nature and need of the present investigation, Descriptive survey method has been selected for the present study.

## 7. Tools Used for Data Collection

Following tools have been prepared to collect data for this study :

- i) Interview schedule
- ii) Inquiry form
- iii) Observation.

The interview schedule was prepared to know the name and sex of the head of the family, number of children, their education, and the social status of the head of the family, his decision making capacity, and link with the society, etc.

Inquiry forms are used to investigate the household infrastructure of the scheduled caste families such as housing system, furnishings, living style, use of electricity, use of wood or gas as fuel, use of radio, television, having self water resources or not, having fisheries, having animal farms, poultry farms and nursery or not.

Another tool for data collection, that is, observation, is used to know social and academic atmosphere, standard of living of the family.

### 8. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The collected data have been analysed by applying different statistical techniques [according

to Garret Henry (Garret, 1981 and Best and Khan (Best and Khan, 2002)] such as percentage, t-test, ANOVA. On the basis of statistical analysis, the interpretation has been done and findings have been listed and also been shown graphically with the help of bar diagrams.

### 9. Sample for the Study

For the study the 360 samples have been selected as samples from seven villages of two Community Development Blocks, namely, Hajo and Kamalpur. Table No.1 gives a clear distribution of the samples on the basis of the level of education of the heads of the sample scheduled caste families.

**Table No. 1 :** Total number of samples collected for the study according to the level of education of the family heads.

Blocks	Villages	No. of samples according to the education of the family heads			Illiterate
		Up to HSLC	Above HSLC	Total	
Kamalpur	Athgaon	15	15	30	15
	Dorakohara	15	15	30	15
	Hathiana	15	15	30	15
	Nakuchi Bargaon	15	15	30	15
	<b>Total =</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>60</b>
Hajo	Malitola	20	20	40	20
	Kaibartatola	20	20	40	20
	Panipara	20	20	40	20
	<b>Total =</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>Grand Total =</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>All Total = 360</b>					

Here 240 literate samples were collected from two blocks, viz., Kamalpur and Hajo (120 from each block), and 120 illiterate samples were collected from the same blocks (60 from each block).

### 10. Analysis and Interpretation

The two objectives of the study are to study the social status of the literate and illiterate scheduled caste families. Accordingly, to count the social status of the scheduled caste families (both literate and

illiterate) certain indicators were selected, such as –

- The decision making capacities in different household activities (indicated in table No. 2)
- Link with the society counted under different heads (mentioned in table No. 3)

- Household infrastructure facilities of the scheduled caste people where certain indicators were taken in to consideration (as shown in table No. 4)
- Number of children and their level of education at the time of data collection (indicated in table No. 5).

**Table No. 2 :** Percentage showing family heads' participation in decision making process of the family.

Sl. No.	Indicators of social status	Literate 240				Illiterate	
		Up to HSLC		Above HSLC			
		120	PC	120	PC	120	PC
1.	Managing daily routine	79	65.83	98	81.66	24	20
2.	Child birth and no. of children	87	72.5	112	93.33	20	16.66
3.	Education of children	106	88.33	120	100	35	29.16
4.	Adopting family planning measures	102	85	115	95.83	22	18.33
5.	Construction work	92	76.67	120	100	28	23.33
6.	Purchasing property	94	78.33	116	96.67	36	30
7.	Hygienic condition of living	80	66.66	102	85	32	26.66

Table No. 2 reveals that the educated heads of the scheduled caste families enjoy a higher status in the family than their illiterate counterparts when judged on the basis of the indicators mentioned in the second column of the table. It is also observed from the point of view of participation in decision making process of the family that when the family heads are educated (in both the levels of education, i.e., up to HSLC and above HSLC) then their percentage is high in –

- Managing daily routine, i.e., 65.83% (up to HSLC) and 81.67 % (above HSLC) than the percentage of illiterate samples which account for only 20%.
- Matters related to child birth and the number of children it has been found that 72.5% and 93.33% of the literate heads in both levels of education, i.e., up to HSLC and above HSLC respectively, take decision regarding child birth and number of children but the percentage of illiterate samples is only 16.6% in such matters.
- Taking decision regarding the education of children also shows the same trend. Against

88.33% and 100% of the literates samples, in the levels of up to HSLC and above HSLC respectively, the percentage of illiterate samples is only 29.16%

- In matters of adopting family planning measures, the situation is not different and the percentages are 85%, 95.83% and 18.33% for literate up to HSLC, literate above HSLC and illiterate samples respectively.
- In case of construction work, whereas 76.67% of the literate up to HSLC and 100% of the literate above HSLC samples have a say, only 23.33% illiterate samples can take decision in such matters.
- Other indicator, viz., decisions regarding purchasing of property and hygienic condition of living show a similar trend.

However, it is worth mentioning that among all the literate samples, those who are educated above HSLC level, show higher percentage in respect to all the indicators of decision making process than the samples that are educated up to HSLC level.

**Table No. 3 :** Link of the family heads with the society

Level of education of the family heads	Total no. of heads of the family	Education of the heads of the family	Education level wise social status enjoyed							
			Position hold in social organisation		Recognition received in society		Political awareness awareness		Involvement in social activities	
Literate	240	Up to HSLC120	24	20%	11	9.17%	112	93.33%	69	57.5%
		Above HSLC 120	57	47.5%	46	38.33%	120	100%	102	85%
Illiterate	120	Illiterate	2	1.67%	5	4.17%	0	0	2	1.67%

The table reveals that –

- 24 out of 120, i.e., 20% of the literate (up to HSLC) samples and 57 out of 120, i.e., 47.5% of the literate (above HSLC) samples have position hold in social organization. On the other hand, only 2 out of 120 i.e., 1.67% of the literate heads have such position hold.
- When recognition received in society is considered, it is found that, 9.17% and 38.33% literate heads in both the levels of education i.e., up to HSLC and above HSLC respectively have received recognition. However, the percentage for the illiterate samples is 4.17% only.
- It is encouraging to note that 93.33% (up to HSLC) and 100% (above HSLC) literate samples are politically aware. But, at the same time it is most disheartening to see that political awareness level of the illiterate samples is nil.
- When involvement of these samples in different social activities is observed, it is found that as against 57.5% and 85% literate samples in the level up to HSLC and above HSLC respectively, only 1.67% illiterate samples have involvement in different social activities.

**Table No. 4 :** Number and percentage of families having infrastructure facilities.

Education of the Family heads	Household infrastructure facilities							
	Electricity	PC (%)	Sanitation	PC (%)	Pucca house	PC (%)	Own water resources	PC (%)
Up to HSLC 120	120	100	120	100	120	100	120	100
Above HSLC 120	120	100	120	100	120	100	120	100
Illiterate	120	100	83.33	20	16.66	20	16.66	65 54

The table shows that even in matters of infrastructure facilities such as electricity, sanitation etc. the illiterate Scheduled caste people are lagging behind their literate counterparts. The table clearly shows that –

- 120 out of 120 literate (up to HSLC) i.e., 100% and 120 out of 120 literate (above HSLC) i.e., 100% have electricity connection in their houses, again 100 out of 120 illiterate samples i.e., 83.33% have it in their houses.

- While cent percent of the literate samples in both the levels of education have provision of sanitation, only 16.66% of the illiterate samples have such provision.
- Cent percent of the literate samples in both the level of education possess pucca houses, only 16.6% of the illiterate samples are in possession of it.
- However, it is a bit encouraging to note that as against the cent percent literate samples having their own water sources, the percentage of the illiterate samples is 54.

**Table No. 5 :** Indicator wise percentage of social development of the three groups (literate up to HSLC, literate above HSLC and illiterate)

Indicators	Up to HSLC	Above HSLC	Illiterate
FHPDMPF	76.2%	93.2%	23.5%
FHSL	45%	67.7%	1.9%
IF	100%	100%	42.7%

FHPDMPF = Family heads participation in decision making process of the family.

FHSL = Family heads social link.

IF = Infra-structure facilities

In short, the social development of these three groups of schedule caste people can be clearly seen in the graphical presentation given below (Fig. No. 1).

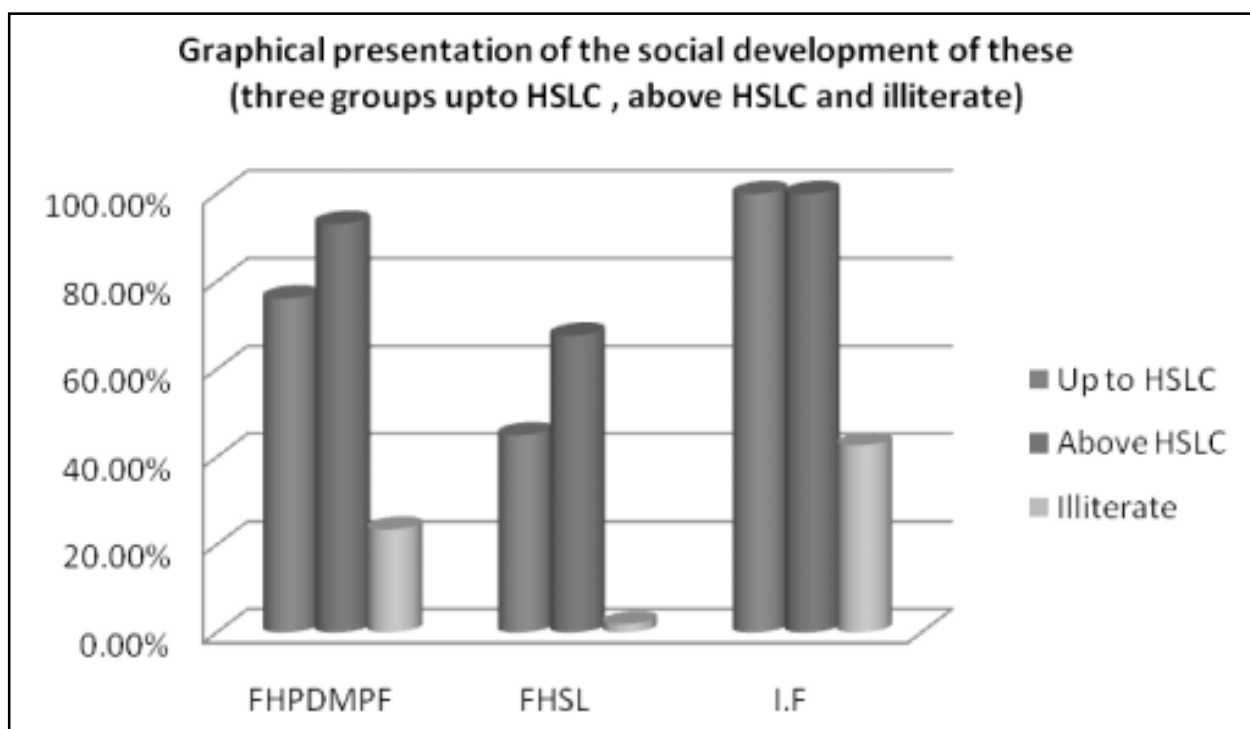


Fig. No. 1 : Indicators of social development

Graphical presentation and percentage shown in Fig. No. 1 and Table No. 5 clearly indicate that the social development is higher in the families whose heads are literate than the families whose heads are illiterate. Except infra-structure facilities,

in case of other indicators above HSLC group shows more of social development. But to test whether the difference is significant or not, ANOVA technique has been applied. The result of ANOVA or F value is shown in the table give below (Table No. 6).

**Table No. 6 :** Shows the result of F

Scores	S. S. (sum of square)	Df (degrees of freedom)	Mean Square Variance	Calculated value of F	Critical value of F
S <sup>2</sup> b	6909.73	3 – 1 = 2	$\frac{6909.73}{2} = 3454.86$	$\frac{3454.86}{489.14} = 7.06$	5.14 (0.05 level)
S <sup>2</sup> w	2844.56	9 – 3 = 6	$\frac{2844.56}{6} = 489.14$		10.92 (0.01 level)
Total	4570.24	9 – 1 = 8			

From the above table, it is observed that under 2 and 6 Df the calculated F ratio value is 7.06 and the critical values under 2 and 6 Df 5.14 at 5% or 0.05 level of significance and 10.92 at 1% or 0.01 level of significance. So there is significant difference between the groups at 0.05 level of

significance and insignificant at 1% level of significance.

So to know exactly where the difference lies, further t test has been done and accordingly from the result of t given below we can analyse exactly where the significant difference lies.

**Table No. 7 :** Shows the result of t test

Mean square Variance	Groups	D Value	σ (Pool SD)	σD	Computed t Value	Df	Critical t Value		Remarks
M <sub>1</sub> = 73.7	M <sub>1</sub> – M <sub>2</sub>	13.3			1.28		5%	1%	Insignifi- cant
M <sub>2</sub> = 87	M <sub>2</sub> – M <sub>3</sub>	64.3	23.3	10.34	6.22	N-K= 9-3=6	2.45	3.71	Highly significant
M <sub>3</sub> = 22.7	M <sub>1</sub> – M <sub>3</sub>	51			4.93				Highly significant

According to the above t test value, it is observed that there is significant difference in the groups at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance in case of Mean 2 & 3 and Mean 1 & 3. But insignificant difference is found between M<sub>2</sub> & M<sub>1</sub>.

So it becomes clear to us that there is no significant difference of social status between the

two literate groups i.e. above and upto HSLC. But the illiterate group’s social status is significantly different from both the literate groups beyond 1% level of significance. Hence, it can be justified to say that education helps to develop one’s social status and hypothesis no. 2 formulated in the study is hereby accepted.

## 11. Findings of the Study

1. The literate samples those are educated above HSLC level show more percentage in respect of the indicators of participation in decision making process of the family heads than the upto HSLC level literate group. Again both the samples education upto HSLC and above HSLC levels show more percentage in respect of the indicators of participation in decision making process of the family heads than the illiterate groups.
2. The literate samples those are educated upto HSLC and above HSLC level show higher percentage in respect of the indicators showing link with the society than the illiterate samples.
3. In matters of infrastructure facilities such as electricity, sanitation etc. the illiterate scheduled caste people are lagging behind their literate counterparts.

## 12. Conclusion

Education helps in raising our social status. Right to Education Bill has been passed in the

Parliament on 1st April 2010. Before that also different plans and programmes were formulated and enacted by the government, such as DPEP, Sarba Sikshya Abhijan, adult education etc. to uplift the educational status of the people of India. Notwithstanding, 100% literacy could not be achieved. Education and economic development are internally related. So in conclusion it can be said that it is important to think for the welfare and development of the oppressed class of the people of our society, mainly scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Although government is giving importance to their upliftment, yet education stands as the main hurdle to their development. Besides this, first generation learners are more among the scheduled caste people for which educating their children became a hard task along with controlling their birth rate.

From the above discussion it is observed that full social equality are necessary for establishing a socialistic society and for developing socio-economic condition we should educate the people first. So, only education can play a vital role to uplift the socio-economic condition of the Sc people.

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